

# EMORY UNIVERSITY

## Sociology 457w

### DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Spring 2021  
Tuesday/Thursday  
2:40 – 3:55 pm (EST)  
PAIS Room 290 and Remote via Zoom

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd  
Zoom Office Hours:  
Wed 1:30 – 3:30 pm (EST)  
[tdowd@emory.edu](mailto:tdowd@emory.edu)

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociological theory sometimes has the unfortunate reputation of being (a) removed from empirical matters and (b) done by people who are now long-dead. That reputation cannot be further from the truth. In fact, sociological theory remains vibrant in the present and, in both its classical and contemporary formulations, it has remained tied to understanding the world in which we live.

One thread that runs through sociological theory is the concern with inequality – both in terms of understanding why it occurs and what needs to be done to eliminate it. To that end, sociologists have put forward theories that address inequality by emphasizing race, gender, class, status and the like (as well as the interplay and intersections found between them).

We take that thread as the organizing principle of this theory class. Indeed, we focus on sociological theory dealing with the mechanisms by which inequality is produced and reproduced, as well as sociological theory that offers solutions about those mechanisms. In the process, we will show, on the one hand, how sociological theory is firmly linked to empirical research and, on the other hand, how sociological theories are formulated and refined by people addressing the present world – both in understanding and improving it.

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### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A) Attendance

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we will use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings.

Of course, given the current pandemic, some students might become sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you feel ill or fear that you are sick, please understand that **I will be flexible about attendance**. Thus, do not put yourself at risk for fear of missing a class. Each lecture will be recorded and posted on the Canvas site and available for you.

For those students attending the class in-person, I expect that we all will follow the safety protocols for our classroom – which includes the need for social distancing and masks.

As we navigate this semester together, let us also stay in touch.

## **B) Office Hours and Appointments**

I will be holding “virtual” office hours via Zoom on Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. Please use my Calendly link to sign up for a specific time: <https://calendly.com/tdowd-1-office-hours>.

If you cannot make those office hours, please email me for alternative times.

The Zoom link for office hours is: <https://emory.zoom.us/j/94647323595>.

I will occasionally hold in-person office hours, as well. I will share more information on those hours as the semester unfolds.

## **C) Written Assignments**

You are required to complete a final paper – one that you will write in stages across the semester.

For each “stage” I will distribute a question to which you will provide a 3- to 4-page answer that draws upon the class materials.

The final paper will emerge as you combine the stages together (incorporating the feedback that you receive along the way) and, at the end, provide an introduction and conclusion to the paper.

The dates for the staged assignments, as well as the final paper, are listed below. Each staged assignment is worth 25% of your grade, with the final paper itself also worth 25%.

## **D) Honor Code**

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.

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## **COURSE RESOURCES**

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, lecture slides) will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 457w (see <http://classes.emory.edu/>).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available on our Canvas site.

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements. For additional information, visit the Emory Office of Accessibility Services website (see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

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### THREE POINTS ABOUT THE COURSE READINGS

Please keep in mind three points regarding the readings below. (1) Sociological theory is found across a sprawling and wide body of scholarship. There is far too much theorizing to address in this course. Thus, the readings below constitute the “tip of the iceberg,” so to speak. Yet, at the same time, I have picked readings that help us grapple with key ideas and lessons. (2) The readings below provide a mixture of classics, “modern classics,” and new articles. Both types of classics matter because they put forward important theoretical formulations and provide an important comparison with contemporary situations. Meanwhile, the newest articles help us keep apprised of the latest developments. (3) Some of these articles are written for specialists. Consequently, they sometimes make use of jargon and sophisticated techniques of analysis. But, have no fear! My job will be to translate those articles for you and, in the process, show you the usefulness of those articles for making sense of sociological theory and everyday life. Put another way, we will use class-time both to ground and go beyond the readings below.

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### COURSE SCHEDULE

*(subject to revision)*

*January 26:* Introductions

#### **SOUNDS AND INEQUALITY**

*January 28:* Jon Cruz. 2002. “Nineteenth Century US Religious Crisis and the Sociology of Music.” *Poetics* 30: 5-18.

*February 2:* W.E.B. Du Bois. 1905. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. London: Archibald Constable & Co. Chapters 1 and 14.

*February 4:* Damon J. Phillips and David A. Owens. 2004. “Incumbents, Innovation, and Competence: The Emergence of Recorded Jazz, 1920-1929.” *Poetics* 32: 281-295.

*February 9:* Joseph C. Ewoodzie, Jr. 2017. *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-Hop’s Early Years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. Chapters 3 and 5.

February 11: Wei-Ting Lu. 2013. "Confucius or Mozart? Community Cultural Wealth and Upward Mobility among Children of Chinese Immigrants." *Qualitative Sociology* 36: 303-321.

### **CREDENTIALS AND INEQUALITY**

February 16: Shamus Khan. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4.

February 18: Yi-Lin Chiang. 2018. "When Things Don't Go as Planned: Contingencies, Cultural Capital, Parental Involvement for Elite University Admission in China." *Comparative Education Review* 62: 503-521.

February 23: Byun, Soo-yong, Evan Schofer and Kyung-keun Kim. 2012. "Revisiting the Role of Cultural Capital in East Asian Educational Systems: The Case of South Korea." *Sociology of Education* 85: 219-239.

February 25: Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2017. *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*. New York: The New Press. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 4.

### **FIRST-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED**

March 2: Lauren A. Rivera. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77: 999-1022.

### **COMMODIFICATION AND INEQUALITY**

March 4: Viviana A. Zelizer. 2011. *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pages 1-18, 72-92, and 128-136

### **FIRST-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE**

March 9: Hung Cam Thai. 2014. *Insufficient Funds: The Culture of Money in Low-Wage Transnational Families*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Chapters 1, 3, and 9.

March 11: Cheris Shun-Ching Chan. 2009. "Creating a Market in the Presence of Cultural Resistance: The Case of Life Insurance in China." *Theory and Society* 38: 271-305.

March 16: **NO CLASS (Rest Day)**

*March 18:* Monica Liu. 2019. "Devoted, Caring, and Home Loving: A Chinese Portrayal of Western Masculinity in Transnational Cyberspace Romance." *Men and Masculinities* 22: 317-337.

*March 23:* Jordanna Matlon. 2016. "Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity." *American Sociological Review* 81: 1014-1038.

## **SECOND-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED**

### **WORK AND INEQUALITY**

*March 25:* Evelyn Nakano Glenn. 1985. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18: 1-43.

*March 30:* Milian Kang. 2003. "The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotions on Korean-Immigrant-Owned Nail Salons." *Gender and Society* 17: 820-839.

## **SECOND-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE**

*April 1:* Sergio Chávez, Heather B. Edelblute, and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn. 2016. "Life on the Edge: Balancing Gendered and Occupational Identities among Unauthorized Mexican Migrant Roofers." *Qualitative Sociology* 39: 125-146.

*April 6:* Adia Harvey-Wingfield. 2013. *No More Invisible Man: Race and Gender in Men's Work*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapters 2, 5 and 6.

*April 8:* Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

## **THIRD-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED**

### **CONNECTIONS AND INEQUALITY**

*April 13:* Martin Luther King, Jr. 2002 (1968) "World House." Pages 177-202 in *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Boston: Beacon Press.

*April 15:* Francisco Vieyra. 2016. "Pickup Basketball in the Production of Black Community." *Qualitative Sociology* 39: 101-123.

## **THIRD-STAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE**

- April 20:* Corey D. Fields. 2014. "Not Your Grandma's Knitting: The Role of Identity Processes in the Transformation of Cultural Practices." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77: 150-165.
- April 22:* Omar Lizardo. 2006. "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks." *American Sociological Review* 71: 778-807.
- April 27:* Mario L. Small and Christopher Sukhu. 2016. "Because They Were There: Access, Deliberation, and the Mobilization of Networks for Support." *Social Networks* 47: 73-84.
- April 29:* **CLASS WRAP-UP**
- May 6:* **FINAL PAPER DUE**